

APPENDIX 1

COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN ADOPTION STATEMENT ¹

Background

1. The Cotswolds Conservation Board (“the Board”) adopted the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-13 on 27th April 2008.
2. Under the provisions of Section 89(7) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, (CROW Act) the Board is required to review the Management Plan within five years of adoption i.e. by 28th April 2013.

Revision process

3. At the Board meeting held on 24th June 2010 it was agreed that it should commence the process of determining whether it is expedient to amend the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-13 by undertaking a review of the Plan, and agreed the outline timetable for such a process
4. At a workshop for Board members held on 7th October 2010 a list of priority considerations for the revision of the existing Plan was agreed.
5. The revision process commenced with the holding of both a series of workshops for invited practitioners and meetings open to the public at locations throughout the AONB, at which changes to the background influences of issues were discussed, and revisions to the current plan suggested.
6. The outcomes of these workshops were considered by the Boards’ Executive Committee. The need for a formal review of the existing plan and a first draft revised Plan was agreed for consultation purposes by the Board on 29th March 2012.
7. A formal consultation took place with statutory bodies and partner organisations over a twelve week period (16th April to 15th July 2012) on the first draft revision of the Plan.
8. Upon consideration of responses to this first consultation process, a revised draft Plan was issued for formal consultation for a twelve week period (12th October 2012 to 13th January 2013) with the statutory bodies, local authorities, parish councils and partner organisations.
9. Responses were considered by the Executive Committee on 7th February 2013, and further amendments made to the Plan, which was then agreed for recommendation to the Board for adoption.
10. The Board adopted the Plan at its meeting on 21st March 2013, with publication to take place as soon as possible thereafter.

Changes to Plan

¹ Required under Section 89(10) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
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11. The Plan as adopted differs in significant ways from the previous Plan.
12. The revised Plan makes clear that it fulfils three functions:

Firstly, it is the statutory plan which sets out the Board's policies for the management of the Cotswolds AONB and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to it.² The actions the Board itself will take to deliver the Plan's objectives are set out in the Board's three-year rolling business plan.

Secondly, it informs public bodies of the means by which they can demonstrate compliance with their statutory duty to "have regard to" the purpose of designation of the AONB when undertaking their functions.³

Thirdly, it guides the engagement of public bodies, landowners, businesses and individuals in the management of the AONB. It includes information regarding available and potential delivery mechanisms. The types of actions the Board would encourage others to take individually or in partnership with others, including the Board, to deliver the Plan, are set out in the Engagement section.

13. The revised Plan stresses the economic and social benefits which arise from a well managed protected landscape, and the important contribution that a resilient and dynamic rural economy makes towards providing these benefits, drawing upon the findings of an "Assessment of the economic value of the Cotswolds AONB" commissioned by the Board⁴.
14. The revised Plan stresses the links between the delivery of ecosystems services and the objectives of the Plan.
15. The seven themes of the former Plan are grouped under two sections "Conserving and Managing" and "Understanding and Enjoying", based on the Board's statutory purposes. Each section has objectives assigned to it.

Conserving and Managing:

Landscape
Rural Land Management
Natural Resources and Services (Formerly "Natural Resources")
Historic Environment
Biodiversity
Development and Transport
Climate change and Globalisation

Understanding and Enjoying:

² Section 89, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as amended by the NERC Act 2006

³ Section 85, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

⁴ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/publications/reports/assessment-of-the-economic-value-of-the-cotswolds-aonb-final.pdf>

Awareness and Appreciation	
Enjoying and Exploring	
Health and Well Being	(New theme)
Participation	(New theme)
Tourism	(New theme)

16. Each theme includes a detailed analysis of key issues needed to be addressed by the Plan, and a set of policies.
17. The policies are clearly written so as to represent Board policy towards a particular issue. The policies will be used both to devise Board programmes of activity and also to respond to proposals by others involved in the management of the AONB. The local authorities will be encouraged to adopt similar policies.
18. The Plan continues with a section dealing with implementation, monitoring and evaluation which is largely based upon the same section in the former Plan but contains a more detailed list of monitoring indicators.
19. The Plan concludes with an Engagement section. The purpose of this is to set out the Board's view of actions other partner organisations and individuals involved in the management of the AONB could take. Whilst not all suggested actions may be currently possible for the identified partner/s, the Board considers that taking them would:
 - better deliver the purpose of designation of the AONB;
 - assist the Board to better deliver its own purposes; and
 - deliver the objectives of the Management Plan.
20. Due to the scale of changes made to the former Plan, it is not feasible to produce a schedule detailing these changes.
21. During the Review process the Board has been mindful of guidance produced by the former Countryside Agency as to how to carry out such a review⁵, whilst also bearing in mind the particular status and purposes of the Conservation Board and the time since that guidance was issued.

The Significance of the Plan for Public Bodies

20. The introduction of the Plan draws the attention of public bodies to the provisions of Section 85 of the CROW Act. These require all public bodies e.g. local authorities, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB when exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB. DEFRA guidance issued in 2005⁶ sets out how "relevant authorities" can demonstrate compliance with this duty, including reference to AONB Management Plans.

⁵ "Guidance for the review of AONB Management Plans, CA221, Countryside Agency (2006)

⁶ "Duties on relevant authorities to have regard to the purposes of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads." DEFRA 2005